A LETTER to HILTON,

The Grand Informer:

In Answer to his Several late Printed Libels.

Renowned Captain!

I Have Perused with no small Satisfaction, *The Lamentation of a bad Market*, Or, the History of your Sufferings, Intituled, the *CONVENTICLE-COURANT, setting forth the daily Troubles, Dangers and Abuses that LOYAL GENTLEMEN meet with*, &c. Alas! Dear Heart! what a Cursed *Whiggish* Age is this! wherein People have an Antipathy to *Toads*, and express their Aversion against *Vermine* and *Beasts of Prey*. What pitty it is, that they will not *Court* their Plagues, and with the Stupid *Indians* Worship the *Fiend* that Torments them? Bless us! That two such useful LOYAL Implements, as *Natt. Thompson* and thy Self, should ever be Liable to *Factious* rotten Eggs and *Presbyterian* Turnep-Tops.

But, *Courage*! Monsieur, though 'tis a Base Ill-natured World abroad, thou art extreamly Kind and Civil at Home, and *Dubb'st* thy self at every turn, A GENTLEMAN; Good Sir! Oblige us in what County lies your *Estate*, that our Friends the *Addressors* and *Abhorrers* may put you up for a *Parliament-man* next Election? In what part of the World are we to Inquire for your *Manors* and your *Fee-Simples*? Your *Mansion-House* we understand was lately a *Garret* in *White-Fryars*, and if Madam *Collier* hath since taken you into Protection and Accommodated you with a *Lodging* in *Arundel*-Buildings, she may no doubt likewise have settled upon you a large Reversion in *Newgate*;——'Tis I Perceive all the *Mode*, now a days for the very Scum of Mankind, to take upon them as *Persons of Quality*, and the most *Beggarly Cowards* to Boast what Feats they'l do with their LIVES and FORTUNES.

The words *Loyal* and *Gentleman*, are grown common Prostitutes, ask any tatter'd Bulley, or Lowsy Snark o'th Town, what he is? He presently Replies——*Damme Sir! a Gentleman*; and to shew ones self a Mad Drunken Swearing Swaggering Coxcomb, is by some counted to be *Loyal*. Yet as it can't be Imagined that any thing of *Generous* Birth, or Education, would ever descend to the Infamous Trade of a Common INFORMER (especially in your way, which is but to be *Journey-man to the Devil*; for he's Master of the Company, and his very Title,—*Accuser of the Brethren*) so what mighty *Loyalty* there is or can be in Prophaneing the Lords-day, disturbing Gods Worship, Worrying our Honest Peaceable Neighbours because they have a little more Care of their *Souls* than our-selves, and Impoverishing and dividing his Majesties Loyal Protestant Subjects, (agreed in all necessary Points of Religion) for some *Trifling Ceremonies*, is scarce to be apprehended.

Grant there be Laws unrepeal'd against *peaceable Dissenters*, yet since the same were so many years happily laid to sleep by His Majesties Prudence, and the moderation of his Subordinate Ministers (of which the Nation have found no Cause to Repent) on what *Provocation*, or for what *new Misdemeanours* are they now Awakned? How come they *this year* to oblige your Conscience Sir, to be an Informer! Or any Magistrates to Thunder and Lighten with their *Warrants*, more then they did two, three, four, five, or six years past? (or by the way, how comes the *Act against Conventicles* more to oblige peoples Consciences to Execute it, than the *Act for Prohibiting French Wine*, Which sworn Officers not only *neglect* to Execute, but actually do *violate* it every day, and yet are blameless, and counted never the *less Loyal* Subjects?) If *Guelphs* transgress, must *Gibelines* be punisht? Because the *Papists* have Plotted Horrid Treasons, and Providence discovered them, must poor Innocent *Protestant Dissenters* be therefore stript and lasht? Is it the best Course to preserve our Religion and Government, to weaken the true Interests of both? Is worrying one another the only way to prevent the united Designs of *Rome*? Are our *High-Church-men* so Cock-sure of Victory over *Romes* swarming Priests and Jesuits, as to scorn all Assistance, nay to fall foul and destroy those that offer it, (though never so heartily, and never so well Arm'd for the Encounter) unless, forsooth, they will wear the same *Feathers in their Caps* as they do? If these *Tantyvee-Troops* all alone, are indeed such an over-match for the Papists, how then comes it to pass, That they have suffered so many *prime Sheep* to stray out of their own Folds, and remain *Trophies* to *Italian Wolves*, as well as *plagues* to their Native Country? Whereas we have scarce heard of above *one Dissenter* that turn'd Papist these twenty years, and he too drawn rather by want and discontent, than any Conviction of Judgment.

'Tis true, had the late SHAM-PLOTS succeeded to the least degree of Probability, there might have been some Colour for these Prosecutions; but since Heaven has unravelled those *Snares*, and made the *Innocence and Loyalty* of the Dissenters appear no less Illustrious, than the Malice and *Treasons* of their Popish Enemies are Notorious, still to seek occasions to Buffet them, seems like to gratify none, but those Enemies to our King and Religion who Contriv'd and were so disappointed in the former Hellish Projects of false Accusation and Perjuries.

But, if neither the *unreasonableness*, nor the *unseasonableness*, yet Experience how *vain* such Severities are to reach the Ends pretended, might be enough to divert the playing over again the same troublesome Game to no purpose. What Advantage did there accrew to this Honourable City, in STARLING's Mayoralty by all the Bustle he occasion'd? None; but on the contrary, great Charge, Confusion, decay of Trade, neglect of the Publick Worship, *&c.* What gain'd that Gentleman to himself, but *Damage, Trouble*, and *Infamy*? Remember, O Doughty Captain! I will not say the ends of *Judas* and other Antients of your

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Profession, but the Fate of your more Modern Predecessors *Sir*—and *Marshal*; did not *One* of them *poor, miserable, hated, and desperate* as *Cain*, breathe out his loathsome Soul in a Jail; and the other live scorned and neglected, without ever getting Two-pence by all his Devilish Industry? Was there one *Dissenter* the less? nay were they not Encreased? Had the Church of *England* thereby any Proselytes worth owning? No, no, 'tis an Eternal Truth, That force may make many *Hypocrites* (and is any Church either the better or the stronger for such?) but never one *Real Convert*. You may as well think to cure a man of the Cholick by *Brushing his Cloaths*, or fill a quart Pot with *Syllogismes*, as to Convince people by *Distress and Mittigmus*, or Rectify Errors of the Understanding by Club-Law.

Who can but observe, how jocund the *Papists* are at these Prosecutions, and that none are such furious Zealots for driving all into *Church* as those that very seldom come there *themselves*? none so fierce against Nonconformity, as those who are *Nonconformists* to the Laws of God, and all the obligations of Sobriety, Modesty and Honesty. Amongst these *Spiritual Whipsters*, you, most Redoubted Captain, Lead the Van; and to shew yourself accomplisht (*Tam Marte quam Mercurio*, as the School-boy has it) with a *Convent Master-some Pen* as well as a *dead-doing Sword*, will needs divert the Town with the Numb. 1. weekly Iliads of your Exploits in this Holy War. Where first you begin with a kind of Preachment.—* *Had not the Actual Accomplishment of the many* DREADFUL PREDICTIONS AND DIREFULL PROPHECIES (that is, to say—*Dreadful* and *Dreadful Prophecies & Prophecies*,) &c.—In the name of Wonder How long has the Devil turn'd *Monk*? Is *Jack Hilton also amongst the Prophets*? What more *Life-Guard-men* set up for *Cure of Souls*? Is not this a Specimen of your *Talents*, how fit you may be shortly for a *Fat Benefice*? If *Waggerism* were on the *Rising Ground*, who knows but we might find our *Divine Captain*, a *Lancepesade* to a *Conventicle*?——To be serious, did not Truth assure us, That the *Devil* himself hath more than once abused and perverted Sacred Leaves, we had been astonisht at so many *Texts* from such an unhallowed Mouth. But tell us by all thy hopes of *Knighthood*, what *Romish Priest* framed that Canting Preface for thee? Or what security can you give, after all this Fury against *Dissenters*, That you yourself are not a *Dissensing Papist*? What Parish-Church do you frequent? When and where did you use to receive the *Sacrament* before the space of four or five years past? How shall we know, that your Title of *Protestant* is not as falsly assum'd as that of *Captain*? Which undoubtedly commenc'd at a Bawdy-House, for you never were capable of higher Preferment than a Common Trooper, where (till you were Cashier'd for some of your good qualities) *your Passive Valour* under the Discipline of every mans *Cane*, was as famous, as now your Active Courage against the *Phanatiques*.

However, be you *Papist* or *Atheist*, we know whose Drudgery you are doing; would not your Foolish Out-Cries of *a Rent, a Schism, the Earthquake, this gaping Pit*, &c. have served much better in Queen *Mary's* days, had your Worship but liv'd then to be one of bloody *Bonners* Catchpoles? Or may not any Protestant Church be Esteem'd as *Seditious* and *Unlawful* under a *Popish Successor*, as a Presbyterian Conventicle? would not you gladly, if you were in *France*, use your *Sublime Commission* and that *Resolution of the Council of Heaven*, you talk of, To Punish the *poor Huguenots*, if they would not Conform to the Church as there *by Law Established*? Our most Gracious King, as he hath oft express'd his Inclinations to Indulge *tender Consciences*, so by his special Favours to those Persecuted *French* Protestants, declares that he esteems them of the *same Religion with himself*, (which also his Royal Grand-Father expressly affirmed in Print) and that he disapproves of undoing men for their Religion, and yet those *French* Protestants are *Calvinists* and *Presbyterians*, names against which you vent your Spleen and Fury; and *They* and these People at home whom you are so Busy to ruine for their Religion, are of the very same Tenets. So that it seems a Riddle beyond *Oedipus*, if we should blame Persecutions abroad, and pitty and Harbour the Sufferers, and yet at the same time, practise in effect the same Severities on our own Countrey-men.

Can any thing be more ridiculously Impudent than to tell us, *You Design the Procurement of Peace amongst Christians, especially Protestants*, and talk *of your Zeal to serve the King, Church and Peoples Peace*? A pretty way of Procuring *Peace* Indeed, to fall foul with Violence on harmless People in the Worship of the *God of Peace*; To dragg them from their Prayers with Tumults and Files of Musqueteers, and a whole Regiment of *Oaths* and *Curses*; To Jail their Persons and Spoil their Goods, and force Families to fly from their Habitations, and Compel one Neighbour against his Conscience to Prosecute another, and when he would gladly be *Serving God at Church*, fright him with five pound Forfeiture, if he do not Omit his own *Devotions*, to disturb *those* of others, altogether as Loyal, and much more Orthodox and Godly than their Malicious Prosecutors; If this be Promoting *Peace*, Commend me to the *Spanish Inquisition* for a Peace-maker.

The remainder of your first Libel, and those that have been Publisht since, your *Lies, Scandals, Prophanations of Scripture*, &c. shall be Considered at another Opportunity, For I shall not fail (God willing) to wait on you *again next Post*, and undeniably prove that the Honest Constables have no Cause to be *afraid* of your Malicious Menaces, In the Interim because I have in my Baptism Solemnly Renounc'd *the Devil and all his Works*, Excuse me if I do not Subscribe my self,

Aug. 19. 1682. *Your Servant*,

Philoculebias Misonebulonides.

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